

L E T T E R

T O

T-----P---, Esq;

FROM THE

AUTHOR of *SIRIS*.

CONTAINING

Some farther Remarks on the VIRTUES OF

TAR - WATER,

AND

The METHODS for Preparing and Using it.

Non sibi, sed toti.

D U B L I N :

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LETTER

^{TO}
T. P. Esq;

FROM

The AUTHOR of *SIRIS*.

I.

AMONG the great Numbers,
who drink Tar Water in *Dub-*
lin, your Letter informs me,
there are some, that make or use it
in an undue Manner. To obviate those
Inconveniencies, and render this Water

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as generally useful as possible, you desire I would draw up some Rules and Remarks in a small compass, which accordingly I here send you.

II.

Put a Gallon of cold Water to a Quart of Tar, stir and work them strongly together for about four Minutes ; let the Vessel stand close covered for eight and forty Hours, or even, for better clarifying, three Days and three Nights, that the Tar may subside, then pour off the clear Water, and keep it in Bottles, well corked, for Use : This is a good general Rule, but as Stomachs and Constitutions are so various, it may admit of some Latitude, the less Water or more stirring makes it stronger, as more Water or less stirring makes it weaker.

III.

III.

The same Tar will not do so well a second Time, but may serve for common Uses: The putting off Tar that hath been used, for fresh Tar, would be a bad Fraud. To prevent which it is to be noted, that Tar already used is of a lighter brown than other Tar. The only Tar that I have used is that from our Northern Colonies in *America*, and that from *Norway*, the latter being thinner, mixeth easier with Water, and seems to have more Spirit. If the former be made use of (as I have sometimes known it with good Success) the Tar Water will require longer stirring to make it.

IV.

Tar Water when right, is not paler than *French* nor deeper coloured than *Spanish* White Wine, and full as clear; if there be not a Spirit very sensibly perceived in drinking, you may conclude

clude the Tar Water is not good ; if you would have it good, you must see it made yourself. Those who begin with it, little and weak, may by Habit come to drink more and stronger, according to the Season, or the Humour of the Patient. It may be drank either cold or warm ; In Cholicks, I take it to be best warm. If it disgusts a Patient warm, let him try it cold, and *vice versa*. If at first it create a little Sickness at Stomach, or nauseating, it may be reduced both in Quality and Quantity. In general, small Inconveniencies are either removed, or born with small Trouble ; it lays under no Restraint as to Air, Exercise, Cloaths, or Diet, and may be taken at all Times in the Year.

V.
As to the Quantity in common chro-
nical Indispositions, one Pint of Tar
Water a Day may suffice, taken on an
empty Stomach, at two or four Times,
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to wit, Night and Morning, and about two Hours after Dinner and Breakfast; more may be taken by strong Stomachs. Alteratives, in general, taken in small Doses, and often, mix best with the Blood, how oft or how strong each Stomach can bear, Experience will shew. But those who labour under great and inveterate Maladies, must drink a greater Quantity, at least one Quart every 24 Hours, taken at four, six, or eight Glasses, as best suits the Circumstances and Case of the Drinker. All ~~of which must be done with Patience~~ and Perseverance in the Use of this, as well as of all other Medicines, which, if sure and safe, must yet, from the Nature of Things, be slow in the Cure of inveterate Chronical Disorders. In acute Cases, Fevers of all Kinds, it must be drank in Bed warm, and in great Quantity, the Fever still enabling the Patient to drink, perhaps a Pint every

every Hour, which I have known to work surprising Cures.

VI.

As the Morning's Draught is most difficult to nice Stomachs, such may lessen, or even omit it, at the Beginning, or rather postpone it till after Breakfast, and take a larger Dose at Night; the Distance from Meal-time need not be more than one Hour, when the Stomach is strong, or the Glasses small: the Oil that swims on the Top, may ~~when be dissolved in the rest of the Liqueur, for use with the~~ skimmed off and kept for outward Sores. Whether there be any Difference between old Tar or new Tar, or which of all the various Tars, produced from different Trees, or in different Parts of the World, is most medicinal, future Trials must determine.—I have made a second Sort of Tar Water, to be used externally, as a Wash or Lotion for the Itch, Scabs, Ulcers, Leprosy, and all such
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foul Cafes, which I have tried with very good Success, and recommend it to the Trial of others. For inveterate Cafes of that Kind, Tar Water should be drank, a Quart every twenty four Hours, at four, six or eight Glasses; and after this hath been done a Fortnight, the Lotion is to be applied outwardly, and warm, by bathing, fomentidg and steeping, and this several times in the twenty four Hours, to heal and dry up the Sores, the Drinking being still continued. This Water, for external Use, must be made in the following manner: Pour two Quarts of hot boiling Water on a Quart of Tar, stir and work it strongly with a flat Stick or Ladle, for a full quarter of an Hour; let it stand eight Hours, then pour it off, and keep it close covered for Use. It may be made weaker or stronger as there is Occasion.

VH.

My Experiments have been made in various Cases, and on many Persons; and I make no doubt its Virtues will soon be more fully discovered, as Tar-water is now growing into general Use, though not without that Opposition which usually attends upon Novelty. The great Objection I find made to this Medicine is, that it promises too much. What, say the Objectors, do you pretend to a Panacea, a thing strange, chimerical, and contrary to the Opinion and Experience of all Mankind. Now to speak out, and give this Objection or Question a direct Answer, I freely own that I suspect Tar-water is a Panacea. I may be mistaken, but it is worth trial, for the Chance of so great and general a Benefit, I am willing to stand the Ridicule of proposing it. And as the old
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Philosopher cried aloud, from the House-tops, to his Fellow Citizens, *educate your Children*; so, I confess, if I had a Situation high enough, and a Voice loud enough, I would cry out, to all the Valetudinarians upon Earth, *drink Tar Water*.

VIII.

Having thus frankly owned the Charge, I must explain to you, that by a Panacea is not meant a Medicine which cures all Individuals, (this consists not with Mortality) but a Medicine that cures or relieves all the different Species of Distempers. And if God hath given us so great a Blessing, and made a Medicine so cheap and plentiful as Tar, to be with all so universal in its Effects, to ease the Miseries of human Life, shall Men be ridiculed or bantered out of its Use, espe-

especially when they run no Risque in the Trial.

IX.

It must be owned I have not had Opportunities of trying it myself in all Cases, neither will I undertake to demonstrate *a priori*, that Tar Water is a Panacea. But yet methinks I am not quite destitute of probable Reasons, which, joined to what Facts I have observed, induced me to entertain such a Suspicion.

X.

I know Tar was used to preserve Cattle from Contagion; and this may be supposed to have given Rise to that Practice of drinking Tar Water for a Preservative against the Small-Pox. But as the Tar Water used for that Purpose was made by mixing equal Quantities

Quantities of Tar and Water, it proved a most offensive Potion ; besides, as a fresh Glass of Water was put in for each Glass that was taken out, and this for many Days on the same Tar, it followed that the Water was not equally impregnated with the fine volatile Spirit, though all alike strongly saturated with gross Particles.

XI.

Having found this nauseous Draught very useful against the Small Pox, to as many as could be prevailed on to take it ; I began to consider the Nature of Tar. I reflected that Tar is a Balsam flowing from the Trunks of aged Ever-greens ; that it resists Putrefaction ; that it hath the Virtues of Turpentine, which in Medicine are known to be very great and manifold ; but I observed with all, that Turpentine or Balsams are very offensive in

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the taking : I therefore considered distinctly the several constituent Parts of Balsams ; which were those, wherein the medicinal Virtues resided, and which were to be regarded, rather as a Viscous Matrix to receive, arrest, and retain the more volatile and active Particles ; and if these last could be so separated and disengaged from the grosser Parts, as to impregnate a clear and potable Liquor, I concluded that such Liquor must prove a Medicine of great Force, and general Use. I considered, that Nature was the best Chimist and Preparer of Medicines, and that the Fragrance and Flavour of Tar argued very active Qualities and Virtues.

XII.

I had, of a long Time, entertained an Opinion agreeable to the Sentiments of many ancient Philosophers, *That Fire may be regarded as the Animal Spirit*

rit of this visible World. And it seemed to me that the attracting and secreting of this Fire in the various Pores, Tubes, and Ducts of Vegetables, did impart their specifick Virtues to each Kind; that this same Light, or Fire, was the immediate instrumental or physical Cause of Sense and Motion, and consequently of Life and Health to Animals; that on Account of this Solar Light or Fire, *Phæbus* was in the ancient Mythology reputed the God of Medicine: Which Light as it is leisurely introduced, and fixed in the viscid Juice of old Firs and Pines, so the setting it free in Part, that is, the changing its viscid for a volatile Vehicle, which may mix with Water, and convey it throughout the Habit copiously and inoffensively, would be of infinite Use in Physic, extending to all Cases whatsoever, inasmuch as all Distempers are in Effect a Struggle, between the *Vis Vitæ* and the peculiar

Miasma or fomes morbi; and nothing strengthens Nature, or lends such Aid and Vigour to Life, as a Cordial which doth not heat.

XIII.

The Solar Light in great Quantity during the Space of many successive Years, being attracted and detained in the Juice of antient Ever-greens, doth form and lodge itself in an Oil so fine and volatile, as shall mix well with Water, and lightly pass the *Prime Viæ*, and penetrate every Part and Capillary of the organical System, when once exempt and freed from the grosser nauseous Refin. It will not, therefore, seem unreasonable, to whoever is acquainted with the medicinal Virtues of Turpentine in so many different Distempers, for which it hath been celebrated both by antient and modern Physicians, and withal reflects on the

Nausea

Nausea or Clog that prevents their full Operation and Effect on the human Body, it will not, I say, seem unreasonable to such a one to suppose, that if this same Clog were removed, numberless Cures might be wrought in a great Variety of Cases.

XIV.

The *Desideratum* was, how to separate the active Particles from the heavy viscid Substance which served to attract and retain them, and so to order Matters, that the Vehicle of the Spirit should not on the one hand be volatile enough to escape, nor on the other, gross enough to offend. For the performing of this, I have found a most easy, simple, and effectual Method, which furnisheth a potable inoffensive Liquor, clear and fine as the best White Wine, Cordial and Stomachic, to be kept bottled, as being endued with a
very

very sensible Spirit, though not fermented.

XV.

I tried many Experiments as to the Quantity of Water, and the Time of stirring and standing, in order to impregnate and clarify it, and, after all, fixed on the forementioned Receipt, as the most generally useful for making this salutiferous Liquor well impregnated, and not offensive to common Stomachs, and even drank with Pleasure by many: in which the most medicinal and active Particles, that is, the native Salts and volatile Oil of the Balsam, being disentangled and separated from its gross Oil and viscous Refin do, combined together, form a fine, balsamic and vegetable Soap, which not only can pass the Stomach and *Primæ Viæ*, but also insinuate itself into the minutest Capillaries, and freely pervade the whole Animal System; and that, in such full

full Proportion and Measure, as suiteth every Case and Constitution,

XVI.

The foregoing general Considerations put me upon making Experiments in many various and unlike Cases, which otherwise I should never have thought of doing, and the Success answer'd my Hopes. Philosophical Principles led me to make safe Trials, and on those Trials is founded my Opinion of the salutary Virtues of Tar Water; which Virtues are recommended from, and depend on, Experiments and Matters of Fact, and neither stand nor fall with any Theories or speculative Principles whatever. Howbeit, those Theories, as I said, enlarged my Views of this Medicine, led me to a greater Variety of Trials, and thereby engendered and nourished my Suspicion, that it is a Panacea. I have been the more prolix in these Particulars, hoping that, to as many as shall candidly weigh and
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consider them, the high Opinion I conceive of this Medicine will not seem altogether an Effect of vain Prepossession or blind empiric Rashness, but rather the Result of free Thought and Inquiry, and grounded on my best Reason, Judgment, and Experience.

XVII.

Those who have only the Good of Mankind at Heart, will give this Medicine fair play; if there be any who act from other Motives, the Publick will look sharp and beware. To do Justice to Tar Water, as well as to those who drink it, regard must be had to the particular Strength and Case of the Patients. Grievous or inveterate Maladies must not be treated as common Cases. I cured a horrible Case, a Gangreen in the Blood, which had broke out in several Sores, and threatened speedy Death, by obliging the Person

son to drink nothing but this Liquor for several Weeks, as much and as often as his Stomach would bear. Common Sense will direct a proportionable Conduct in other Cases. But this must be left to the Conscience and Discretion of the Givers and Takers.

XVIII.

After all that can be said, it is most certain, that a Panacea sounds odd, and conveys somewhat shocking to the Ear and Sense of most Men, who are wont to rank the universal Medicine with the Philosophers Stone, and the Squaring of the Circle; whereof the chief, if not sole Reason, I take to be, that it is thought incredible, the same Thing should produce contrary Effects, as it must do, if it cures opposite Distempers. And yet this is no more than every Day's Experience verifies. Milk, for Instance, makes some costive, and others

others laxative : This regards the Possibility of a Panacea in general ; as for Tar Water in particular, I do not say it is a Panacea, I only suspect it to be so.—Time and Trial will shew.

XIX.

But I am most sincerely persuaded from what I have already seen and tried, that Tar Water may be drank with great Safety and Success, for the Cure or Relief of most, if not all Diseases, of Ulcers, Itch, Scald-heads, Leprosy, the foul Disease, and all foul Cases, Scurvies of all Kinds, Disorders of the Lungs, Stomach, and Bowels, in Rheumatic, gouty and nephritic Ailments, Megrims, Pleurisies, Peripneumonies, Erysipelas, and all Kinds of Fevers, Hysterical and all nervous Cases, Dropsies, Decays, and other Maladies, nor is it of Use only in the Cure of Sicknes, it is also useful to preserve Health, and guard against

gainst Infection, and in some Measure even against old Age, as it gives lasting Spirits, and invigorates the Blood. I am even induced by the Nature and Analogy of Things, and its wonderful Success in Fevers of all Kinds, to think that Tar Water may be very useful against the Plague, both as a Preservative and a Cure.

XX.

But I doubt no Medicine can withstand that execrable Plague of distilled Spirits, which do all, without Exception, the Fire of the hot Still imparting a caustic and coagulating Quality to all distilled Spirits, whatever the Subject or Ingredients may be, operate as a slow Poison, preying on the Vitals, and wasting the Health and Strength of Body and Soul; which Pest of human Kind is, I am told, gaining Ground in
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this Country, already too thin of In-
habitants.

I am, &c.

F I N I S.